



# **VCS Challenge Fund**

## **Haringey VCS Challenge Fund: Healthy Neighbourhoods – Application Guidance**

### **1. About Haringey Community Collaborative**

Haringey Council and the NHS North Central London Integrated Care Board have jointly commissioned Haringey Community Collaborative since May 2024. The Community Collaborative is delivered by Public Voice and Mind in Haringey. We provide strategic leadership and capacity building support for the borough's voluntary and community sector (VCS), with a focus on grassroots organisations and underserved groups.

We aim to help and support groups and organisations, and the sector overall, with:

- Sustainability and fundraising
- Governance
- Service delivery and scaling
- Recruiting and working with volunteers
- Measuring, reporting and increasing impact
- Networking, convening and working in partnership
- Being heard and valued by decision makers and key stakeholders in and beyond Haringey

We involve residents and organisations in all levels of decision making, from identifying priorities and themes for the VCS to the allocation of local grant funding in Haringey.

### **2. What is a Haringey VCS Challenge Fund?**

Haringey VCS Challenge Funds provide grant funding that local voluntary and community organisations can apply for. Each Challenge Fund round focuses on a specific theme

identified through the Haringey Community Collaborative VCS Priorities Report and wider engagement with partners and communities. Round 1 of the challenge fund took place in 2025 and focused on the 'cost of living'.

**Challenge Fund – Healthy Neighbourhoods** aims to support community-led approaches to improving health and wellbeing, reducing health inequalities, and strengthening neighbourhood resilience. Successful grant awardees will be selected by a community panel of local residents, experts, and stakeholders.

Grant awardees will receive funding to deliver projects, alongside tailored capacity building support, and will be expected to participate in shared learning and a final showcase event.

### 3. Background and context: Why 'Healthy Neighbourhoods'?

The theme for this round has been developed in response to:

- The NHS 10-Year Plan and a system-wide shift towards a **neighbourhoods-based model** for improving health and wellbeing.
- Recognition that **health inequalities in Haringey are stark**, with residents in Central and East Haringey more likely to experience poorer health outcomes.
- Growing understanding that **wider social determinants of health** (such as housing, social connection, income, and digital inclusion) strongly influence life chances and long-term wellbeing.
- A commitment from the NHS and local partners to **co-produce services and activities** with communities and the VCS, and to shift resources towards **prevention rather than treatment**.

This fund aims to support **residents most at risk of poor health outcomes** by:

- Increasing awareness of health risks, screenings, and services
- Improving health literacy and confidence engaging with health systems
- Empowering people and communities to lead healthier lives

### 4. How has the fund been shaped?

The Healthy Neighbourhoods Challenge Fund has been shaped through collaboration and consultation with:

- Health Inequalities Investment Oversight Group (ongoing steering)
- Neighbourhoods & Health Inequalities Board (information and consultation)
- Neighbourhood Delivery Board (information and consultation)

- Haringey Community Collaborative VCS Priorities 2026–2027 Report (co-produced with Haringey's VCS)

## 5. Grant structure and funding available

### Main Fund

- **Total available:** £70,000
- **Grant size:** Typically, up to £10,000 per organisation
- **Funded cohort:** Approximately 6-8 organisations
- **Delivery period:** 6 months (from Mon 2<sup>nd</sup> March - Mon 31<sup>st</sup> August 2026)
- **Eligible organisations:** Annual income of £500,000 or less

### Follow-on Fund

- **Eligibility:** Open to organisations that successfully delivered a Main Fund project
- **Grant size:** Typically, up to £15,000 per project
- **Number of projects funded:** 2
- **Delivery period:** A further 6-9 months
- **Requirements:**
  - Demonstrate close working with Neighbourhoods teams
  - Ideally show partnership working with others in the Main Fund cohort and/or wider VCS

## 6. Eligibility criteria

### Eligible organisations

Applicants must be one of the following:

- Registered Charity
- Community Interest Company (CIC)
- Company Limited by Guarantee (set up for charitable purposes)
- Community Benefit Society
- Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO)

Charitable Company Applicants will be required to provide governance and financial information as part of due diligence.

## 7. Challenge Fund: Focus, Outcomes and Projects

### 7a) Focus: Healthy Neighbourhoods

This round will fund projects that improve health and wellbeing at a neighbourhood level, particularly for residents experiencing inequality, social isolation, or barriers to accessing services. Projects should be community-led, culturally appropriate, and rooted in local assets such as community centres, parks, libraries, Family Hubs, and GP or health settings where appropriate.

We particularly welcome projects that support residents in **Central and East Haringey wards**.

### 7b) Desired outcomes

Funded projects should deliver one or more of the following outcomes:

- Improved resident health and wellbeing, with people feeling empowered to support their own health and live healthier lifestyles
- Reduced health inequalities by supporting vulnerable populations, including socially isolated and digitally excluded residents
- Increased **health literacy**, with residents more confident engaging with health systems and services (resident activation)
- Improved access to health information, preventative care, and early intervention

### 7c) What kind of activities will be funded?

The Healthy Neighbourhoods Challenge Fund will support activities related to **wraparound care, prevention, wellbeing, and community resilience**. This includes, but is not limited to:

- Culturally appropriate, community-led health and wellbeing activities (e.g. healthy food initiatives, exercise sessions, wellbeing programmes)
- Mental health and emotional wellbeing support
- Promoting social engagement, peer support, and community networks to reduce isolation
- Co-designed projects that actively involve residents in shaping services and activities
- Digital skills development to help residents navigate services, self-advocate, and access support (e.g. using the NHS App)
- Health education, awareness raising, and support for self-care
- Delivery through trusted local community assets and neighbourhood spaces

#### **7d) Health and wellbeing priority themes**

We encourage applications that address one or more of the following priority health themes, in line with Haringey Neighbourhoods priorities:

- Hypertension and heart health
- Respiratory conditions
- Diabetes
- Mental health and wellbeing
- Housing-related determinants of health
- Older people experiencing isolation

### **8. Capacity building and Neighbourhoods working**

As part of the funding requirements, all applicants must allocate £1,500 of their project budget within their funding application to support participation in Neighbourhoods-related capacity building activities. This allocation is intended to ensure that VCS staff are appropriately reimbursed for the time and resources required to take part in this work. This will include required attendance at:

- Theory of Change and impact measurement (onboarding session)
- Introduction to Neighbourhoods working
- Health awareness sessions linked to Neighbourhoods priority themes
- Information sessions on key health messages and guidance on signposting and referrals
- Co-design sessions for targeted engagement and awareness-raising initiatives

Additional, tailored support will also be available via Haringey Community Collaborative, including funding and bid writing, volunteer recruitment, partnership-building sessions with other VCS organisations and Neighbourhoods teams.

### **9. Sustainability and legacy**

The Challenge Fund is designed to create lasting impact beyond the grant period. This includes:

- A showcase event at the end of the Main Fund programme, connecting funded organisations with potential partners and funders
- Capacity building support to help identify and engage onward funding opportunities
- A Follow-on Fund to help scale and deepen successful initiatives, including delivery through Neighbourhood hubs
- Strengthening the role of VCS organisations as trusted promoters of health literacy within vulnerable communities

- Building long-term working relationships between VCS organisations and Neighbourhoods teams, with opportunities for future collaboration and co-bidding

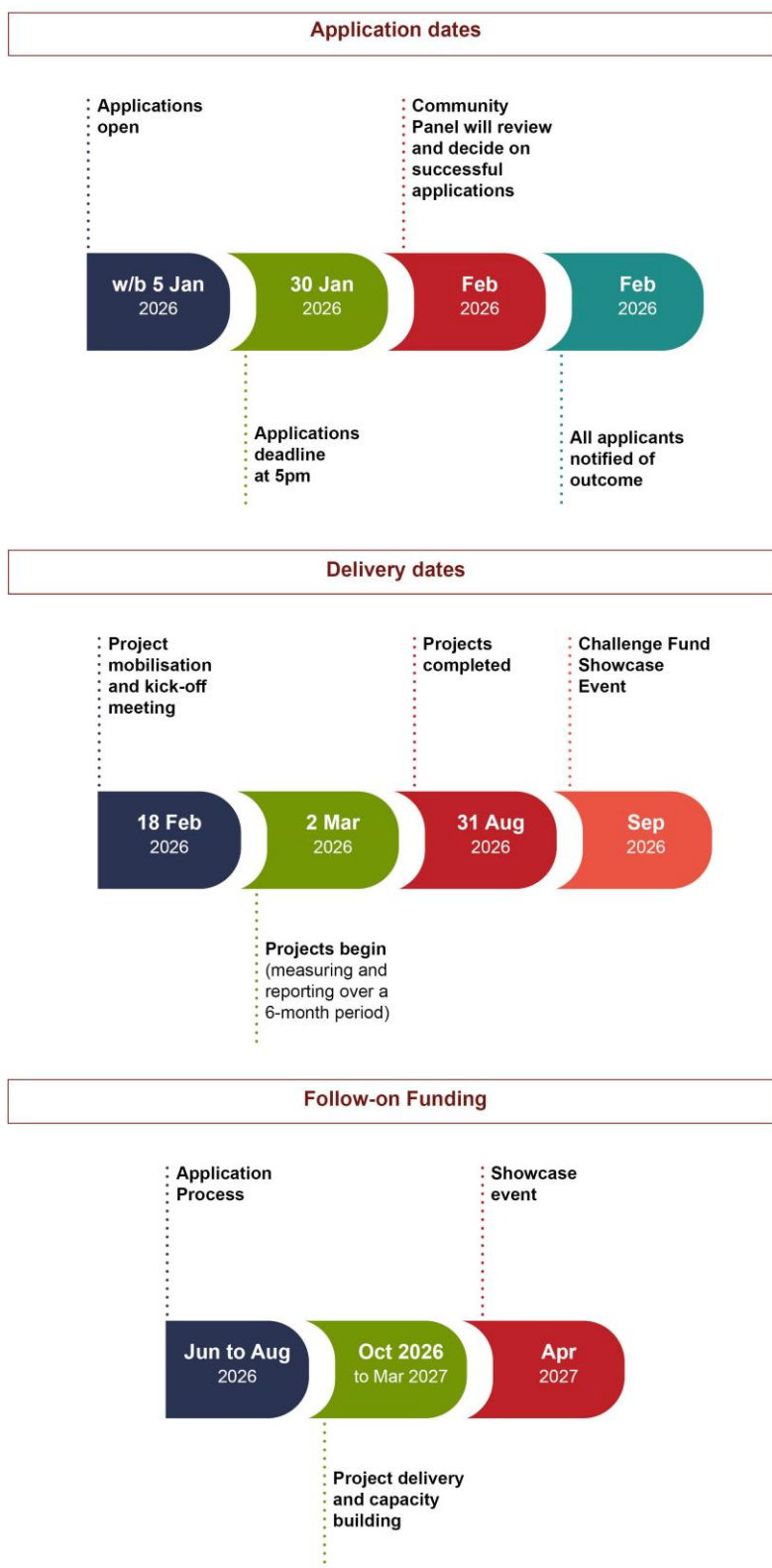
## 10. Key dates

### Main Fund

- Applications open: **Wednesday 7<sup>th</sup> January 2026**
- Applications close: **Friday 30<sup>th</sup> January 2026, 5pm**
- Applicants notified of outcome: **February 2026**
- Successful projects onboarding: **February 2026**
- Project delivery and Neighbourhoods capacity building: **Monday 2<sup>nd</sup> March 2026 – Monday 31<sup>st</sup> August 2026 (6 months)**
- Showcase event: **September 2026**

### Follow-on Fund

- Application process: **June – August 2026**
- Project delivery and capacity building: **October 2026 – March 2027**
- Showcase event: **April 2027**



## 11. How to apply

Complete the [Healthy Neighbourhoods Challenge Fund Application Form](#) (Survey Monkey). Applicants will be asked to clearly demonstrate how their proposed project aligns with the Healthy Neighbourhoods themes, desired outcomes, and Neighbourhoods-based working.